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E WANDERER

HENRY LANE ENO

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THE WANDERER

By the Same Author

THE BAGLIONI. *A Play.*
ACTIVISM. *An Essay in Philosophy.*
INDIAN SUMMER. *Poems.*

THE WANDERER

BY

HENRY LANE ENO

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To

THEODORE WHITEFIELD HUNT

THE WANDERER

PART ONE
THE EASTERN SHORE

THE WANDERER

PART I

THE EASTERN SHORE

Long years ago, when from familiar shores
The Wanderer journeyed forth in his strange quest,
His heart was still aflame with youthful fire,
Driving him onward with immense desire
Toward everything most beautiful and best.

And though his own land seemed unlovely, bare
Of all those splendours from far ancient times
Which lay upon the Old World like a dream—
Rude castle wall, quaint ruin-bordered stream,
And fairer cities in more mellow climes—

Yet, surely, in that heavier foreign air
To which still clung the glories of the past,
Sweet Wisdom would unlock her golden bars,
And Beauty, in her glittering robe of stars,
Would meet his ever-longing eyes at last.

For his whole life had been a haunting vision
Of an elusive loveliness half seen,
Since when, in boyish solitary moods,
He roamed the sunny hills and sombre woods,
Or, loitering in the meadows freshly green,

He heard faint voices in the summer wind,
Voices that murmured to his wondering ears
Of marvellous countries far away and bright,
And snow-clad mountains gleaming on the night
In majesty too moving even for tears.

So now he sought his vision wide and far,
Through temple and palace with their treasures old,
In learning's ancient ivy-covered halls,
By marble mosque where the muezzin calls,
And even where the sacred Ganges rolled.

For long he lingered with the city throngs
Giving his years, as spendthrifts waste their gain,
To sit at many master's wise converse
In search of some new teaching that might pierce
The world-old tragedy of sin and pain.

For months, again, he wandered through strange lands—
Wrapped in the mantle of his inner thought—
Lands passing like a pageant to his eyes,
Swift as dark-driven mists on wintry skies
Where fierce winds of the wild storm-gods are wrought.

THE WANDERER

He saw the Southern Cross shine on the Nile
Over the golden Nubian desert sands,
The sunrise on Himálaya's snowy crest,
And heard the nightingale, in sweet unrest,
Sing in the moonlight by Sicilian strands.

And yet the fairness of a thousand climes
Could not appease his eager heart's desire
To win a beauty that was still unfound,
A wisdom deeper than the empty sound
Of all the words that learning could inspire.

For, though he journeyed half around the world
Still seeking ever, under the vast dome
Of heaven, were it but a fleeting gleam
From all those visions of his boyhood dream,
He only found what he had left at home.

Since everywhere men laughed, and toiled, and died,
A prey to their purblind insatiate greed;
And everywhere the swiftly gathering gloom
Of secret and inevitable doom
Foretold a vengeance which no one would heed,

Until, at last, the first flash from the storm
Burst on the astonished world, while the dull roar
Of cannon and the tramp of grim hosts spread,
Through peaceful hamlet and fair field, the dread
Inexorable thunderings of war.

Yet, swept into that sombre rushing tide,
He bravely played his inconspicuous part,
Till, when the long sad sacrifice was done,
And victory, at last, was well-nigh won,
The shafts of Fate found his war-weary heart.

And when, as he lay lonely in the night
With bleeding wound and slowly-taken breath,
Eleanor came—an angel through the dark—
To light again life's faintly flickering spark
And snatch him from the hungry hounds of Death—

Eleanor who, in distant sunnier lands,
Had been his playmate many years gone by,
When they had roved their native fields afar
Until the beam of Beauty's beckoning star
Had lead her to some fairer foreign sky.

But now, through weary weeks and struggling hours,
Her pity compassed him until, once more,
The blood ran coursing through his quickened veins,
And to his ears came faint and far-off strains
Of voices calling from his loved home-shore,

Awakening an ofttimes repressed desire
To see again his own steep mountain-side,
Familiar fields, cool brooks, and rocky glades,
And hear the wind from pine-embowered shades
Where thrushes sweetly sing at eventide.

Then swiftly, on the pallid crest of dawn,
Out of the star-shine and the drifted foam,
He came—from lands that now seemed far away,
Unreal as tales told in some minstrel's lay—
To the blue heaven of his forgotten home.

Yet, in the cities with their flaunting wealth
And monstrous towers striving to the skies,
He found but strange half-alien hoards in pain,
Bound to the wheel by their mad lust for gain,
Deaf to the Old World's war-worn miseries.

For though, when desolate and far away,
His distant country like a vision had seemed
Of some bright goddess beautiful and dear
In act of noblest sacrifice, yet here
He saw, alas, that he had only dreamed.

So, heart-sick, his own forests took him in,
Stirring the soul of his ancestral race,
And calling him—from stern New England hills,
From high-bent sky, and moss-bound rocky rills—
Back to their rugged shadowy embrace.

And there again, beneath the new-born leaves
Of elm and maple, sweet with winds of June,
Eleanor came, her eyes as dark and deep
As hemlock-guarded bluebells half asleep,
Or violets under the new-risen moon;

With heavy-woven tresses on her brow
Gleaming like some pale-dusted ancient gold—
Fair as cloud-moulded petals lightly born
Upon the sunrise winds of early morn
When fragile flowers of daybreak first unfold.

And there, through fragrant uplands clover deep,
By shaded woodside and cool-rushing stream
They strayed, or lingered by the murmuring sea
Hand clasped in hand, like children light and free,
Lost in the enchantment of a summer dream.

"Oh, tell me, then, dear friend of bygone years,"
The Wanderer questioned from his lonely heart,
"How long will this fair vision, now so bright,
Enfold us with its frail wings of delight;
Or must the world drift us again apart?

THE WANDERER

Must I still search for some far-off reply—
Sought through these slowly-lingering years in vain—
To riddles that my haunting spirit asks,
Forever driving me on new and stranger tasks,
Wandering everywhere through sun and rain?

Or is this, now at last, the radiant dawn
When all the melancholy clouds shall rend
Before the glory of our day-star's glow?
He asked; but, with a smile, she answered low
"When love has come, all questionings will end!"

PART II

THE TOILERS

PART II

THE TOILERS

But soon a strange new voice within him cried
"Away! The heart of all your country calls.
No longer can you linger here
To watch the tender-budding year.

Up then, and westward with the roaming stars,
Seeking the Guiding Spirit of your land
Through evening mist and morning dew
Until at last your dream comes true;

Undaunted, for the fight may not be won
To-day, as when you strove in blood-stained France:
But age-long is the Spirit's fight
For freedom, beauty, and for right!"

So, like none but some antique paladin,
The Wanderer left again his ancient home,
The hope of love, the love of ease,
The murmur of his well-known seas,

The spires, the stately elms, the salt-blown spray,
The mellow sunlight on familiar hills:
Henceforth all these would lie—how long—
Behind him like a lingering song!

And now, each day, the following sunbeams rose,
Casting his shadow on the dewy grass
That silently before him stole
Crowned with a gleaming aureole;

Save when the cities hid him for a time
Within the turmoil of their rushing hoardes,
While wood and meadow deep in hay
Seemed long ago and far away.

And there, amid the pale and toiling throng,
He sought almost in vain for some free soul—
Free from the ceaseless clang and din,
From misery and world-old sin;

Where men, by their own enginery devoured,
Sweated and died that other men might live;
And night and day vast quenchless fires
Vexed heaven with their blazing spires.

Yet when, aweary, he had come at last
Within the shelter of some sacred aisle,
To seek peace from that restless spell;
He found naught but a carven shell

Old with the enrichment of a bygone age—
Remote as painted mummies from the Nile
Whence all the lingering spirit had long fled—
An effigy of faith half-dead.

And so he went again into the night,
The silence, and the everlasting hills,
From greed of gold, and furnace blast,
And all the old gods of the past,

To where the living God yet reigns alone,
Speaking with still small voice, to those who hear,
In storm and sunshine, wood and stream,
Or through the glory of a dream:

Across the pine-clad mountains toward the west
Where golden rivers roll to shining gulf;
Through meadows fresh with budding corn
Green in the summer's rosy morn;

By farm and woodland through the rolling plain,
Village and homestead where, beneath the shade,
Rose sweet above the warbling throng
The thrush's fluted evening song;

Or by the uplands starred with yellow bloom
Where bluebirds mocked the sky with azure wing,
And meadowlarks had just begun
To pour their hearts out in the sun.

Thus ever, in his onward-driven quest
He slowly wended his long westward course
Through morning mist and fiery noon,
And the faint shadows of the moon;

Until, one night-fall, at a farmer's home,
An old man welcomed him with these strange words
"I, too, have come from far away
Where the eastern sun leaps from the bay;

Where, in the minds of even humble men,
There lingers still a touch of things divine,
Some vision of beauty and rebirth
In worlds above our common earth.

But here the good and bad, both far and near,
Are lost and fettered in an iron thrall;
Deaf to all dreams, their dull eyes blind
To splendours borne upon that wind

Blowing forever from the silent stars
Where mighty Beings, in their ranks sublime,
With god-like patience strive to claim
Our errant spirits from their shame!"

"Who are you, and what message do you bring,"
The Wanderer asked, "That, far from your own shores,
Your only friend Heaven's glittering brow,
You live here humbly by the plough?"

"I have been sent," the old man answered him,
"A follower of Sweden's mighty seer,
To keep alight some feeble spark
That this fair land may be less dark!"

Then, even while speaking, seemed a tenuous fire
To spread a moment on his forehead pale,
As with uplifted hand he blessed
The traveler to his peaceful rest.

Yet when, while still the sparkling tears of night
Lay like a benison on waking earth,
The Wanderer westward fared alone,
His strange and gentle host had gone.

PART III

THE GRAIN FIELDS

PART III

THE GRAIN FIELDS

Thence, ever westward, wending long and slow,
He wandered through the boundless plain,
By field on field of wind-tossed golden grain,
Where sunshine rimmed the distant clouds of rain
With crested snow;

While, farther than his vision could extend,
Vast seas of wheat stretched to the sky,
Or measureless lagoons of thick-sown rye
That rolled in rustling waves, mellow and high,
To the world's end.

For through long centuries the rich life-blood
Of stream-washed hill and mountain side,
From far across the upland prairies wide,
Had poured its slowly gathering fertile tide
In ceaseless flood—

Feeding how many ancient tribes of men,
Or mighty armèd monsters, long since gone,
That roamed huge forests now turned into stone,
And ever waiting for some race, new-grown,
To come again;

Until to-day the harvesting of years
Lay soft in early autumn haze,
Dreaming of savage warriors of old days
Hunting the herds of bison from their graze
With flint-tipped spears.

THE GRAIN FIELDS

Vast golden granary of all the world,
Pouring its wealth on friend and foe,
Life-bringing rivers in unending flow
That rush wherever errant winds can blow
Or sails be furled!

Heart of old Earth, whose ever-abounding stores
Enrich her countless children still—
Nearby, in every hamlet, town, and mill;
Afar, by tropic forest, stream, or hill
On distant shores!

Spendid the vision seemed, bathed in the sun,
And noble the unceasing toil
That forced its treasures from a virgin soil
To scatter wide the rich and ripened spoil
So hardly won.

Yet when night's purple veil had fallen again,
Deep-strewn with stars until the morn,
He seemed to hear strange voices ask in scorn—
Voices of little children yet unborn—
From some far plane:

"Tell us, O Wanderer—We, whose utterance comes
Like dew upon the sleeping earth,
Only to those free of the world's dark girth—
What shall the harvest be in our new birth
From these bright homes?

The teeming grain is growing tall and wide,
But how do *men* grow in this ground?
Harkening, we hear the faint despairing sound,
Mirthless, of souls to utter blindness bound,
On every side.

Grain and rich gold! What matter these at last,
When we shall have escaped once more
Through death's inevitable open door,
Bearing alone to this strange distant shore
Deeds of the past?"

Then on the silence and the star-gemmed deep
The voices faded with the wind,
Leaving the Wanderer's sad and troubled mind
O'ershadowed by the healing wings of kind
And gentle sleep;

Sleep, when the spirit, free from earth's dull bond,
Soars into twilight regions dim,
Over the midnight ocean's wind-tossed brim,
Over the moon's mysterious silver rim,
And far beyond.

But, when the dawn again with crimson shafts
Had pierced night's shroud from far away,
While from each dew-drenched sun-ensparkled spray
Swift heralding the glory of the day,
Sweet morning draughts

Spread jewels everywhere; refreshed anew
By the enchantment of a heaven-sent rest,
Forth fared the Wanderer on his lonely quest,
Still following warm winds that from the west
Unceasing blew.

Over the plain, like some slow-rolling sea
Held ever motionless and still,
As though by some almighty giant will
Long frozen into broad-bent vale and hill
And flower strewn lea;

Yet, to the unaccustomed vision, so clear
In the pure air, so vast in sweep,
Swaying with cloud-driven shadows purple-deep,
That all the distance seemed to swing and leap
Sharp-seen and near.

And then, at last, one day when storms had blown
Across the sky with lightning sword,
Wild rush of rain, and crashing thunder-chord,
Far to the west over the prairies broad
The snow peaks shone;

Shone like some fragile and enchanted range
Of silvery clouds by magic hurled,
With all their bright ethereal banners unfurled,
High-flung above the compass of the world,
Remote and strange.

And the Wanderer's heart leaped toward that distant
glow,
Fair as the evening star's first beam,
Mysterious as some half-forgotten dream
Of mountains clad in loveliness supreme,
Glittering with snow.

PART IV

THE MOUNTAINS

PART IV

THE MOUNTAINS

"Heart of the mountains, in my heart your song
Wakes all the longing of a thousand lives!
Since, first, primeval Ocean, clinging still
To your young rock, sank into age-long sleep,
How often have I seen you in my dreams
Beckoning me with everlasting arms
To climb above the flat and sordid world
And find new rest: How often, through the years,
Has the far splendour of your shining crown
Glowed, like a gleam of heaven, above the clouds,
And kept me true to your celestial vision!"

Thus rang, within his mind, the clarion
Of all the hills; while, like a homing dove
Straight-winging as an arrow to her nest,
He drove his eager steps toward that long goal,
Till the dim cloud-like barrier took shape;
First the low foothills breaking like great waves
Upon the endless ocean of the plain,
Then the pine-crested heights, the vast grim ramp
Of ice-scarred granite, and above them all
The lonely snow peaks, sharp against the sky.

Now left behind, at last, were the pale plains,
The grain-clad prairie, orchard, farm, and field,
The patient deep-ploughed earth, cities and towns
With all their ceaseless din of wheels and men—
Gone like a swiftly fading vision of night,
Lost in the beauty of the rising hills.

While, as he journeyed, ever stronger grew
A longing for the mountains, cool with winds
Blown through the pine-sweet forests from the snows.
For there, at last, alone and far away,
He might endure awhile with his own thoughts
That even now, swift-winging from the past,
Like rushing flocks of winter-driven birds,
Cried out for answers—What of his long search,
His country's need; of love, and Eleanor?
For ever had her quiet footfall seemed
To match his own, her softly whispered words
To urge him on, and sometimes even her hand
All quietly to steal into his grasp,
Invisible and tenuous like the veil
Of azure distance on the morning hills,
When he, alone of all the sleeping world,
Was waking underneath the watchful stars.

So no town held him in its friendly clasp,
No stranger curbed his haste, but upward ever
With toiling stride in the thin air he climbed.
And now the rolling uplands, yet o'erstrewn
With purple autumn flowers, rose to long vales
Deep-driven into dark spruce-covered slopes
Where the late white-crowned sparrows, silent now,
And tiny kinglets, their sweet-ringing songs
Forgotten in the vanished summer haze,
Were gathering for their far-off southern homes;
While flaunting magpies and bold, flippant jays
Mocked the shy owl hidden in the shade.

Then, after long nights underneath the stars,
Sweet-scented with the pines, fragrant with firs,
And musical with wind-blown forest lyres,
Still upward the lone Wanderer took his way
Until the mighty snow-peaks, like a wall,

Rose over him and blotted out the sky;
While far below, beyond the lesser hills,
Rolled to the east the illimitable plain.
And as he watched the purple shadows flung
By cloudy silver chariots, wind-driven,
Speed far away, till shade and sunshine met
Upon the azure sky-rim, and the world
Of hill and plain swung surging like the sea,
He longed again that Eleanor were there.

High in the valley, close beneath the snows,
A lonely cabin nestled in a glen.
A solitary trapper, old and gray,
As lean and sturdy as a mountain pine,
Called it his home; and there the Wanderer found
Secluded rest; while, rich in memories,
The ancient huntsman told of days gone by,
Of winter snows and summer storms; of bear,
And lynx, and antlered elk; of men

Yet fiercer in those wild old early times
While still the Red-skin hunted through the gorge.

But when alone—the trapper journeying far—
The Wanderer, quiet in the noonday sun,
Or by the nightly fire whose soaring sparks
Rose mingling with those sparks of heaven, the stars,
Lived with his crowding thoughts, till his whole life
Drifted before his inward-gazing eye,
And all the outer world—the mountains, rocks,
And forest glades—grew dim and far away,
And till, as he sank deeper in the sea
Of rushing thoughts, he saw himself, at last,
As any stranger, moving through the years—
His boyhood in those far New England hills,
His travels, work, and play; long peaceful hours,
The pageantry and havoc of the war;
And always, like an angel floating near,
The dream of Eleanor.

But, most of all,
There came a vision of the distant East
When, long ago, he sat in the cool shade
Of giant deodars, gazing with awe
Upon the mightiest mountains in the world.
So vivid was the illusion, he seemed indeed
Still to be living in those far-off lands,
Seated again, like some old Hindu sage,
In silent meditation, breathing deep,
Alone beneath the solitary snows.

Then, one night, Winter, from his icy crests
Where he had long been prisoned by the Sun,
Slipped silently into the wooded vale,
And when the day broke, all the forest bent
Beneath a soft and gleaming silver shroud.
Short grew the days, and long the frozen nights,
When quiet stars, their vast remoteness clear,
Slept at the pinnacles of their dark cones.

But as the great cold ever grew apace,
And arctic blizzards piled the trail with drifts,
The Wanderer's heart turned weary, and his wounds
Awoke afresh from their long healing sleep:
And though the rough old trapper watched him well,
The poison spread through all his weakened frame,
Bringing illusions, fever-born and wild,
Crowding disordered from the shadowy past,
Until he lived again those awful hours
Upon the far-off battle-fields of France,
And nightly-long the beating of his heart
Thundered the roar of cannon in his ears.

But, one night, when the rushing western winds
Had vanished suddenly, and a deep calm
Fell, like a benediction, on the hills,
He seemed to feel a cool and soothing touch
Like heavenly dew upon his burning brow.
"Awake!" a voice said gently, "I am here!"

And gazing through the dark he seemed to see
An unknown stranger seated by his side.
"I have come from far," the words flowed thin and clear,
"Because you are a messenger sent forth
By those who have prepared you all these years—
Whose hidden purposes I also, serve—
Chosen to kindle the faint dawning spark
Of wider vision in this new-born land.
A comrade waits for you, and now is near.
Send to her; for your work is not yet done!"
So speaking, the stranger faded on the night,
Still leaving a faint radiance in the gloom.

Then out into the wilderness of ice
The gaunt old trapper fought his gallant way,
Snow-shoed and furred, ever speeding toward the plain,
Through pass and forest tracked with tiny feet,
While the Wanderer, lonely in the mountain wilds,

Slept but to waken, and then slept again.
How many hours had passed he could not tell.
For day slid into night, night into day,
Until his feeble hand could hardly grasp
The draught that kept his soul and body there;
When lo! one sunrise, the rude door flung wide,
And Eleanor, against the rosy dawn,
Stood like a dream of heaven, and stretching out
His longing arms, the darkness took him in.

For life and love they fought the winter long,
Till victory was won at last when Spring
First hovered lightfoot on the ice-bound hills,
And once again, in sheltered valleys, Earth
Awoke from her profound and frosty sleep.
Then, when the mountain pass was free once more,
And lingering sunshine lay upon the pines,
They left the lonely glen, and, with the dawn
Of hope and love, there rose again for them
Desire of life, and homely ways of men:

From far, the warm heart of the waking world
Called to their quickening pulses, once again
An eager longing kindled in their blood
To hear the music of the mating birds,
The rustle of soft winds among the leaves,
To smell the salt spray blowing from the rocks,
And listen to the thunder of the waves.

Away then, westward, toward the distant shore
With Eleanor beside him, through the plains
Now greening with the first faint flush of spring,
Where meadowlark and towhee tuned their lay;
Through gloomy winding cañons up once more,
Over the mountains, bare and snowbound still,
By river, forest, lake, and wilderness
Aglow with magic purple desert haze,
Through town and village; till, at last, the sun
Faded before them, through a mist of gold,
Into the glory of the western sea.

PART V

THE SONG OF THE STRANGER

PART V

THE SONG OF THE STRANGER

Then, idly once again, o'er field and wood
They roamed together, long hour after hour,
Through sunshine and brief rainbow-tinted shower;
Or when the round moon in pale splendour stood
Above the mountains pouring down a flood
Of magic silver radiance, while the power
Of love—now come to its perfected flower—
Swept them along in its melodious mood.
And there, at last, in the immortal Spring,
The first strange answer to their longing came,
Lighting the darkness with enchanted flame
Until they seemed to soar above the ring
Of solid earth and ocean's mighty frame
Like floating falcons on unwearied wing.

For, one night, as in silence and alone
They lingered by the limitless expanse
Of waters where the frail and glittering dance
Had just begun of fairy starbeams flown
From their far-distant homes, lulled by the drone
Of dreaming waves into a gentle trance,
Suddenly all the world's long circumstance
Was to their new-enlightened vision shown;
While, to their unaccustomed ears, the song
Of some remote and sweet-voiced stranger told,
In magic cadences, of right and wrong,
Fresh worlds new-born before the stars were old,
Life, death, and love; and all those ages long
That Destiny's mysterious books unfold.

THE SEA

"To every child born by the ocean shore,
And nurtured near the mighty cradle-hymn
Sung by the surges sweeping from the rim
Of sky and billow where the sea-birds soar,
There lives a haunting music in the roar
Of breakers, in the cloudy tempest grim,
That, through all life until his eyes grow dim,
Can be lost or forgotten nevermore.
For even his own blood that ebbs and flows
Is but the reddened brine, now prisoned apart,
From Ocean's ancient breast; each thing that grows
Hides deep within its nature the old smart
Of salt sea spray, and every wind that blows
The eternal rhythm of that great mother-heart!

SPRING

"There comes a magic hour in every year
When all the world, on tiptoe, seems to pause,
Harkening to silvery ripples of applause
From meadow, vale, and forest far and near,
Swift-roaming fox, and crowing chanticleer,
From wind-swept hillside where the late snow thaws
And sweet-toned thrushes hidden in the shaws
Tell to the listening throng that Spring is here:
When fled o'ernight are all the wintry gales,
Deep-lying snowdrifts, and wild leaden sea,
The northern ice-bound ships and close-furled sails—
Gone, like a swiftly fading memory
Of dark and half-forgotten ancient tales,
Before the sunshine of new life set free!

BEAUTY

"There lives a poet in each human soul
Who hides sequestered in a land of dreams
Far from the thraldom of our sordid schemes.
A lightsome genius, free from Earth's control,
He roams through Night's immeasurable scroll
Of glittering stars; or, with the auroral beams,
Delays by sweet bird-haunted forest streams,
Seeing all nature as a mighty whole.
For man does not exist by bread alone,
But feeds his finer essence from the skies;
From every summer wind whose gentle tone
Sings through the fields with faint melodious sighs,
And by each ray from Beauty's shining throne
Without whose love his spirit fades and dies.

REST

"Through the twin ivory gates of Death and Sleep
Lies a fair country, waking journeys far
Beyond the furthest unfamiliar star
Whose beams take centuries of onward sweep
To reach our eyes; yet, in a moment's leap,
We pass beyond a magic filmy bar,
Leaving behind the sting of pain, the scar
Of sorrow, and all things that make us weep.
For there we meet the old friends that have gone
To those dim dream-like kingdoms of the blest;
The warrior sees there all his victories won,
The lover finds his dear one's gentle breast,
And there the toiler, all his labours done,
Sinks into visions of enchanted rest.

HOPE

"When weary hours of pain are left behind,
Cast off forever with their irksome chains,
And, once more, through the lithe and tautened veins
The blood runs dancing, then the wakened mind
Knows all the world as beautiful and kind—
The drowsy patter of midsummer rains,
Dawn's tuneful choir, and night's remote refrains,
And the wild music of the sea-born wind.
Then everything that late seemed dull and old
Grows young again with life and lightness new,
The friends who were so far away and cold
Are fond once more, the falsest lovers true,
And all bright heaven's wealth of radiant gold
Gleams in each drop of sparkling morning dew.

DESPAIR

"There comes a crucial time to every man,
Threading his way through life's uncharted maze,
When, to his wondering bewildered gaze,
The world seems mad and destitute of plan—
As some vast midnight ocean where the scan
Of farthest-reaching vision but surveys
A waste of troubled waters that dismays
The reeling senses with its awful span—
When driven by those weltering surges dark,
Beneath the grim and starless wind-swept skies,
Alone upon his fragile tossing bark,
The questioning spirit deep within him cries
In vain for some divine enlightening spark
To solve the riddle of his destinies.

QUESTIONING

"Like some pale, argent, scarce-discernèd moon,
That late gleamed through the gentle dusk of even
Hanging her crescent in a shadowy heaven,
But now faints on the azure heart of noon,
Our little world floats in the void; so soon
To vanish, her bright Sun-lord's glory riven
By some dark star—with all his planets seven
Fading into a final lifeless swoon.
Then why was all this wondrous company born?
What strange and unknown Fate must they obey,
Before whose dark impenetrable scorn
The galaxies of night, the fire of day,
And the amazing loveliness of morn
Shall last so little while, then die away?

WORLDS

"Through countless ages—since vast primal Night
Filled brooding space with her abysmal gloom,
And all the universe slept in her womb
Awaiting the first ray of living light
To drive the lingering darkness into flight
Until the next far-distant day of doom—
The pallid nebulae first kindled into bloom;
Then, through the magic of some radiant might
Sun upon sun, planet, and wandering star
Pierced the dim distance with their tremulous gleam
Till clustered constellations from afar
Had flooded heaven with their lambent stream;
The South's bright cross, Orion's scimitar,
And the fair Pleiads in their glittering dream.

LIFE

"Then, aeons later, when our tiny sphere,
Flung spinning from its parent sun, had lost
Its youthful fire, and brooding storm-clouds tossed
Above a new-born sea, the time grew near
For a fresh-dawning wonder to appear.
Then, out of light and shadow, rain and frost,
The line dividing death from life was crossed,
And the new miracle, at last was here—
The first rude patterns born of ocean's sweep,
Ascending in an ever-lengthening chain
Through strange and fragile forms still half asleep,
Titanic saurian with pigmy brain,
Fish, bird, and mammal; till, with final leap,
Came man with his unearthly joy and pain.

MIND

"From that great moment Nature's reign had gone,
And the overlordship of the sentient Mind,
Although in frail unguarded bodies shrined,
Has ruled the world from Reason's mighty throne.
For the seed of a new order had been sown;
Already from remoter realms strange wind
Was blowing, and no longer dumb and blind
Man walked the earth, majestic and alone.
For now the subtile power of the young Soul
Had stolen from dull Matter's mindless throng
The scepter of its primitive control,
Teaching her fresh-born children that ere long
The swiftest only should not gain the goal,
Nor Victory's laurels guerdon but the strong.

SOUL

"And yet the end of that long senseless night,
When man of his own self had grown aware,
Was but the first step on the toilsome stair
Mounting forever to the distant light.
For now the fledgeling spirit, in its flight,
With strengthened wing-beats sought the upper air,
Greatly to suffer, and yet bold to dare
The issue of its immemorial fight.
So, striving ever toward the far-off Sun,
The unfolding soul pursues its arduous way
Threading through all the ages, one by one,
A string of lives in limitless array,
Until the final victory is won
And twilight turns to splendour of the day.

SIGNIFICANCE

"So shows the world to backward-gazing eyes
Scanning the past with wise discerning look,
Not heedless of the inconspicuous nook
Where Nature hides her deepest mysteries.
For answer to each arduous riddle lies
In every fleeting cloud, each rippling brook,
If, to the many who are blind, the book
Of life was not closed by their tears and sighs.
Yet to the few there comes a still small voice
That whispers secretly, "Be not afraid:
To you alone is given the awful choice
Of glories that endure or those that fade;
For man was born to struggle. Yet rejoice!
It was for beauty that the world was made!"

DEATH

"If life is but an ever-mounting coil,
Climbing through whose austere constraining sheath
The prisoned spirit must strive, then what is death,
Whose shafts the fairest flowers of love despoil
When the worn body sinks into the soil
Its fairness fled with a last sighing breath,
While on the tomb a swiftly fading wreath
Marks the sad end of all this bitter toil?
Thus to our darkened vision does it seem—
Yet death is but the gateway on our course
To realms where, under the ethereal gleam
Of sweeter skies free from earth's binding force,
Quenching her thirst at some mysterious source,
The weary soul may rest awhile and dream.

HUMAN LOVE

"To every wanderer on this toilsome earth
There comes a day when mountain, sky, and sea
Reveal a strange unwonted ecstasy
Awakening the heart from its long dearth
Into a glorious rapture of rebirth;
When our old world seems suddenly set free,
Swaying to a wild lilting melody
That starts all nature dancing with its mirth.
Then from each wood and field some tuneful bird
Proclaims the joyful tidings to its young,
Then dreams grow real, the quickened sense is stirred
By visions that were sought in vain so long,
And from some maiden every idle word
Falls with the cadence of an angel's song!

DIVINE LOVE

"Sweet is the enchanted hour of human love,
Fair as the beauty of a morning mist
That turns from gray to gold and amethyst;
Or as the gloaming, when the amorous dove
Leaves silently her secret nest to rove,
Swift following the dark winds where they list,
Under the night skies that the stars have kissed
With radiance from their flaming homes above.
Yet fairer still is the Eternal Grace
In which each living thing must find its share,
Whose love naught can diminish nor debase,
Nor any unbelieving heart foreswear,
And whose wide everlasting arms embrace
The Spirit's longing children everywhere.

ENLIGHTENMENT

"As from a hilltop by the tossing waves
That roll forever from some distant strand
The eye, far-stretching, makes its vain demand
To pierce beyond the azure flood that laves
The rounding earth, so our weak reason craves
To overreach the eternal glistening band
Which rims the sky and heaven toward that land
Where we shall be free spirits, not dull slaves.

Yet when the inner vision has grown clear,
Released from the confining bonds of sense
The soul's perception leaves this little sphere,
Passing to mystic regions more immense,
Through meditation deep initiate there
Into the splendours of Omnipotence.

CELESTIAL INTELLIGENCES

"Soaring in radiant spirals through the skies
Tier upon tier into the boundless blue,
Myriad as drops of early morning dew,
Attended by vast angel companies
And unimaginable harmonies,
The everlasting glorious retinue
Of bright Celestial Spirits still pursue
Their unmemorial hidden destinies.
Dim mortal vision sees but lambent stars
Like far-off jewels on the helm of night,
But to the eye of wisdom that unbars
The gates of Heaven with its piercing sight
The world with all its tragic woes and wars
Unveils its inmost meaning by their light."

So, dreaming by the ever-sounding sea,
The Wanderer with his belovèd came
To see the whole world spread forth in a flame
Of incommunicable ecstasy;
While as, hand clasped in hand, to melody
Forever sweetly new yet still the same
They roamed the moonlight, the vast-reaching aim
Of the eternal plan revealed its mystery,
And as, together, they turned the illumined page
Of prophecy, they saw their country dear,
Freed from the bonds of this material age,
Growing to wider wisdom year by year
Until, in some far-distant happier stage,
A fresh and fairer splendour had drawn near.

Yet now, obedient to some higher power
That with its strange continual unrest
Still drove them on their predetermined quest,
A faint sweet bell rang out the appointed hour;
And from that land of many a sun-kissed flower
They fled to journey once more to the west,
Braving old Ocean's dark and stormy breast
For wisdom in some far-off eastern tower.
There only, in the perfect unison
Of mystic penetration, wise and old,
With all that our young world has undergone,
The knell of their long wandering could be tolled,
The goal of their wide-sought endeavor won,
Or the issue of their sacrifice unfold.

THE WANDERER

Light from the East! What magic in the word
Since first immortal man began to climb
The age-long path to distant heights sublime,
By suffering and terrors undeterred,
Through some divine mysterious impulse stirred
To seek his aim despite the scythe of Time;
As poets dare to put the world in rhyme,
Or as the spring flight of a north-bound bird!
So, when the dark and doubt-engendering night
Had turned at last to love's perfected day,
In answer to some secret inner light
That bade them end their over-long delay,
With eager spirits poised for their long flight
Into the western sun they winged their way.

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